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Telegram From the Embassy in Chile to the Department of State

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: This telegram discussed a recent Chilean military request for funds to procure weaponry. Given the multiple recent requests by the Chilean military, the telegram predicted that their demands would continue to increase and concluded that it was important that the U.S. Government meet their needs. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 777, Country Files, Latin America, vol. VIII. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Reference telegram 188023 to Santiago, September 21, is Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, vol. XXI, Chile, 1969–1973, Document 363.*

4480. Subject: Military Procurement. Ref: State 188023.

1. Re paragraphs 8 and 9 of reftel, I regret that I must report that a request for ammunition has been received since the flare and helmet request. The Chilean Air Force would like to buy one million rounds of 7.62 mm NATO ammunition. They would like to do this as an FMS cash sale. The FACH would send aircraft to pick up ammunition if made available, and would prefer Canal Zone.

2. While we have not so far had any requests from Chilean Army and Navy, as a realistic assessment, we must expect similar requests soon to be forthcoming. In fact, the Army has already asked about hydraulic fluid for artillery recoil mechanisms and the Navy is talking about 3000 rounds of 3″/50 projectiles for shipboard use.

3. In light of the foregoing, I shall not rpt not make any statement about the continuance of previously planned and approved shipments of military supplies to Chile until further instructed. I fully understand the sensitivity of this problem and factors which would make it immensely preferable if Chileans could turn to procurement from other friendly countries. However, I am sure you also fully understand the urgency of Chile’s needs and the importance the GOC does and will place on the willingness of the USG to be helpful very quickly even at considerable cost and risk. A decision to deny all such requests—even for a relatively short period—would have extremely serious and long term consequences here in our relations with Chilean military.